

Ephesians 2:11-22

God's Avalanche of Grace

Scripture: Ephesians 2:11-22

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:19 "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."

Lesson Focus: It's been said that God's mercy and grace is like an "avalanche" that came and transformed the entire landscape. We will park on that illustration as we read about how God's grace indeed changed and still changes everything for good!

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Avalanche Craft

Starter Activity: Avalanche Activity

Consider starting off the lesson with a silly activity that has the kids pretending to be an avalanche. First have a little discussion about what an avalanche is.

Q: What is an avalanche? A: A huge mass of snow falling rapidly down a mountain side! * Experts will assess that a vulnerable area is hazardous and dangerous and will actually initiate a safe and controlled avalanche with a "BOOM"! *

After the discussion, tell the kids they will get to "BE" an avalanche! Have the kids all stand along the wall on the opposite side of the room and give each one a piece of scratch paper (we will provide scratch paper in your class) * to wad up into a little "snowball". With you standing on the opposite side of the room, have them all charge you together and throw their snowball at you **once** after you say "BOOM". (Or have them run and throw it at a target if you don't want to be pelted!) Make it clear that they all have to approach together for it to be a true avalanche! Afterwards, have them all pick up a snowball and take it to the trash can. *

We did this silly act because what we have seen in the book of Ephesians (and in the Psalms last week!) is an **avalanche** of grace and blessing from God! Jesus Christ's death and resurrection on the cross was the "BOOM" which started it all! And just like how an avalanche is powerful and sweeps up everything in its path, God's powerful grace changes everything for those who believe and trust in Jesus! Let's open our Bibles and continue our study of this amazing **avalanche** of grace!

Bible Study:

Ephesians 2:11a: Our passage begins with the word "Therefore". Every time you start reading the Bible with the word "therefore" you must ask, "What is it **THERE FOR?**" to understand the flow of thought. *

Paul is referring back to the **avalanche** of grace that we read about before. Let's review some of this quickly:

In **Ephesians 2:1-3**, we learn of the bad news of our sin and separation from God. *

In **Ephesians 2:4-7**, we learn of the wonderful phrase "but God" * describing the good news of His **avalanche** of mercy and love that can sweep away all of our sin!

In **Ephesians 2:8-9**, we learn how this happens and that it is not based on our works, but on God's grace (undeserved!) which we receive through faith in Jesus! *

In **Ephesians 2:10**, we learn that God rescued us from sin for a purpose: that we would be changed, walking in His ways and devoted to doing good as His people.

With this background we can now make better sense of our text for today!

Ephesians 2:11b: These believers in Ephesus were Gentiles.

Q: What is a Gentile? A: Someone who is not Jewish (probably most of us)!

Remember the Jewish people were God's special people whom He chose to bring forth the Savior of the world. Unfortunately, they were so overly proud of their * heritage that they treated the non-Jewish Gentiles like "dogs". More on this later.

Ephesians 2:12: And before they were swept up by God's **avalanche** of grace, they had no hope! Remember v. 1 said that they were "dead" in their sin! This sobering truth still applies to people today who are without God. * **No Jesus? No Hope!**

Know Jesus? Know Hope! * (**Teachers:** Consider grabbing one of our missionary pamphlets and highlight them mentioning why churches like RMC still send missionaries out: so that people without hope can be given hope!) *

Ephesians 2:13: But then God's **avalanche** of grace came and those who were cast out and kept away were brought in close! But **only IN Christ Jesus!** Let me help you understand this phrase "In Christ" a little bit better. Everyone stand up and try flying by flapping your arms. Are your arms taking you anywhere? NO! * What would happen if you jumped off a cliff with just your arms? DEATH! That describes everyone of us apart from or "outside of" Jesus: dead in our sins!

But what if you got on an airplane? When you are sitting in the airplane, are you flapping your arms to stay in the air? NO! The airplane does it all! You are not only "in" the airplane, but you are putting your trust in it too. It's similar to being "in" Christ Jesus! To be "in Christ" means we ride the **avalanche** of His grace trusting in Him (and in His finished work on the cross) rather than in our own works! *

Ephesians 2:14-16: When an avalanche sweeps through an area it completely changes the land. In the same way, God's **avalanche** of grace completely changed the game so that Jew and Gentile were now brought together as one people of God!

This enmity or hatred between Jew and Gentile ran very deep! The Jews were like "cats" with their tidiness in religious rule-keeping and they saw all non-Jewish people like filthy "dogs". And as you know, cats and dogs don't mix! (**Teachers:** See pictures we left in your room and consider using them to further emphasize) * But God's **avalanche** of grace wiped out and buried the Jewish religious laws that kept the Gentiles away. It indeed took an **avalanche** to change things so radically! *

Ephesians 2:17-18: This **avalanche** of grace didn't bring destruction, but peace! First, peace with God *, and secondly peace between the Jewish "cats" and the Gentile "dogs"! Again, this is only made possible "in" or "through" Jesus. **No Jesus? No Peace! Know Jesus? Know Peace!** *

Ephesians 2:19: No matter what the Jewish "cats" might say, these Gentile believers in Jesus were part of God's family now! This verse describes a new community that this **avalanche** of grace has created: the church!

Q: What is the church? Is it just a building? NO! * The church are people all over the world from every nation, race, and age who are united together "in Christ"! * God's **avalanche** of grace brings people together into relationship and friendship who would otherwise never spend time together!

Ephesians 2:20: And the church is not just any group of people who gather together to do religious things, but a group that gathers based on the teachings of Jesus and His apostles and prophets.

Q: Where do we find the teaching of Jesus and the apostles/prophets? A: The Bible! (**Teachers:** Lift your Bibles up high!) Any so-called "church" that doesn't adhere to the Scriptures is not a true "church"! *

Ephesians 2:21-22: Notice the repetition of the word "together" in these verses. We were never meant to "do church" alone! We learn, grow, and are built up together! This is why we meet regularly! WE (not ME) are the church! *

Key Point: Have you come under God's **avalanche** of grace? * If not, you are still a stranger and foreigner even though you are sitting right here with us! Coming to a building doesn't make you a Christian. You need to believe and trust in Jesus's death and resurrection for your sins and become part of His church family!

If you are a believer, remember you are His workmanship (v. 10)! His **avalanche** of grace isn't just for you, but for all. Share it! Invite someone to church! Be a blessing to those around you this week!

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Ephesians 2:13. What does it mean to be "in Christ Jesus"?

Second

Are all "churches" true or good churches? If not, how can you tell which is which? Read Ephesians 2:20.

Parent Challenge

Read Ephesians 2:19. What made these Ephesians "no longer strangers and foreigners"?

By His Grace,

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